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Greetings at Christmas from the General Offices of the Church of God

May the Christ whose birth we celebrate at this joyous season bless you by His mercies, guide you by His Spirit, protect you by His love, so that in Him you may have fulness of life both now and forevermore.

James A. Cross, *General Overseer*

Wade H. Horton, *Assistant General Overseer*

H. D. Williams, *Assistant General Overseer*

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DECLARATION OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible. 2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead; that He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor. 4. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins. 5. That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. 6. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost. 7. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people. 8. In the baptism of the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart. 9. In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. 10. In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. 11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement. 12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet. 13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years. 14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

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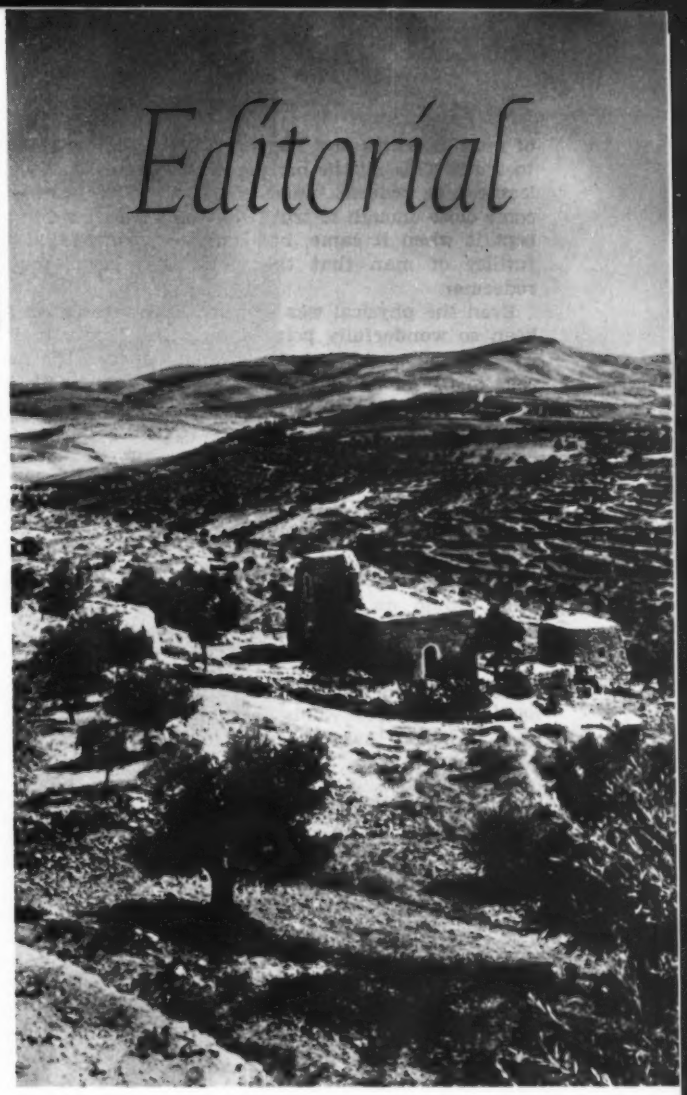
APPOINTMENT in Bethlehem

FRANCIS JENKINS OLCOTT



Charles W. Conn

FOR CENTURIES GOD had an appointment to meet man in the person of the Messiah. This appointment was kept in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago.

The prophets had foretold this great event and the badgered Jews had looked for it with longing. It is to be expected that an event such as God's meeting man in one life would be unusual and miraculous, for it had never been done before and would never be done again. It was the greatest event of all time. The divine appointment was between an infinite God and finite man, a loving God and wrathful man, a holy God and evil man; and that appointment was kept in the person of Jesus Christ, born as a Babe in Bethlehem. This was no ordinary babe, for virtually everything connected with His birth was unusual. When God met man in the person of Christ, everything that touched the event was providential in character. The extraordinary, unknowable, divine, eternal character of this birth can be seen in four manifestations never seen before by man:

1. Its Timeliness
2. Its Nature
3. Its Revelation
4. Its Effects

Consider these things and you can see that this fulfilled appointment was the greatest event the world had ever known.

1. *Its Timeliness.* Christ was born when the fulness of time had come. The earth waited in readiness for His coming despite the fact that He was not received. Everything was in readiness for this appointment. His coming could not have well been at any other time in earth's history.

Judaic teaching had prepared the way for Him. Its teaching of one God, of human worth, of spiritual values, and of eternal truth had set the stage for Him. It was the school teacher to lead men to Christ.

Pagan philosophies had accentuated the desperation

of man. Socrates and Plato in Greece had come close to truth. This all the more demonstrated man's helplessness to redeem himself. Pagan philosophies had come close enough to truth that men were able to accept it when it came, but had so demonstrated the futility of man that the world was eager for its redeemer.

Even the physical was adorned and waiting. As has been so wonderfully pointed out, the Greeks had so covered the world with their language that the message of Christ had a beautiful tongue waiting to proclaim it. The Romans had so covered the world with its authority and its highways that the messengers could speed into all the corners of human existence with the glad tidings. The displaced Jews had colonized throughout the world with their worship and their synagogues, so the message everywhere had a waiting audience and a sounding board to all men.

It fulfilled the Scriptures. The time had come; no other would do. The prophets, poets and believers had foretold Him, and He came.

2. *The Nature of His Coming.* In every way the hand of Providence is seen. No other birth has ever been so wonderful. This fact, in itself, is sufficient demonstration that God had met man in Bethlehem.

The Virgin Birth is of such miraculous nature that it alone sets the birth of Christ apart from all other events of history. It represents the most sublime instance of God's appointment with man, as is summed up by these words to Mary: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The humbleness of Christ's birth is extraordinary when we consider that Joseph was of royal blood, being a descendant of David and the kings of Judah. Well might Joseph have lived in a palace, receiving the homage of his fellow men, but instead he was a humble carpenter who had to make the sacrifice of the poor (Luke 2:24) to commemorate the birth of his "son" and Lord. In God's own good way it so happened that this humble birth was in a stable room so that the Babe was laid in a manger.

FOR A ROYAL SON and a divine Lord to be so lowly born is, in itself, astounding and extraordinary. It did not simply happen; it had a purpose in God's appointment with man. Perhaps it was because the earth's rich men have a way of confining to themselves all that belongs to them. Christ was for all men, not merely the rich or the rulers. The fulfillment of God's appointment with man was announced to the lowly as well as to the lofty.

3. *Its Revelation.* When the fulness of time came, God revealed Himself in His Son to three groups of men and left it to these men to announce His coming to all other men. God revealed His coming to the Wise Men of the East, to the humble shepherds of Judea, and to holy Simeon and Anna in the

Photo on page 3
FIELDS OF THE SHEPHERDS
Bethlehem in the distance

Below:
WHERE THE SAVIOUR WAS BORN
The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is built over a grotto which marks the traditional site where Christ was born 2,000 years ago.

H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

Luomo

Temple. Note that it was revealed to the wise, the lowly and the holy, and it was through them that the wicked and the proud were to hear that God had kept His appointment with man.

4. Finally, *the effects* of Christ's birth set it apart from all other events of history. Nothing less than the meeting of God and man in one Person could have caused such conflicting emotions in the hearts of men.

Holy men were moved to *worship*. Even the shepherds gave awed homage to Him when they made their way to the manger. (If He had been born in a palace or even a wealthy home, would they, or could they, have gained admittance to His side?) Simeon and Anna were moved to anointed worship of the spirit. It was as compulsive in them as it had been to Mary while she bore Him in her womb or to Elisabeth while she stood in His unborn presence (Luke 1:44).

The birth of this Child *struck fear* to the hearts of the wicked. This was no ordinary birth; this was God's meeting with man, and even powerful Herod was scared. He did not have a holy fear, but one which moved him to crime, the crime of murdering innocent children in an effort to murder the Christ.

The Wise Men were moved to *discretion*. They were able to recognize the evil intent of Herod and helped to circumvent it. In every way the hand of God was seen. No other birth has ever had such startling effect on so many different persons.

God kept His appointment with man when Christ was born and moved heaven and earth to do so. Now He has another appointment to be kept when Christ returns and He will move heaven and earth to keep it.

Fear Not:

for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.

By Ralph E. Northrup

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10).

THE FIRST WORDS of the angel to the shepherds on the Judean hills, announcing the birth of Christ, was *"fear not,"* he then gave them the *good tidings* (news) that would bring great joy.

At that time the world was in great chaos and turmoil; evil forces were in control; and Rome held an iron rule over the people causing their hearts to be filled with fear. How timely the birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace, was to the people of God then, and how timely at this Christmas season is the message of the angels to be brought to the attention of the inhabitants of the world today.

Everywhere we look there is violence, revolt, unrest, strife, confusion, and fear. War is brewing, false hopes are decried, and corruption even seems to be creeping into the churches. People are fearful of poverty, sickness, failure, storms, the future, and of man, but they possess very little fear of God. People as a whole are so filled with restlessness that they are unable to sit still very long, or to sleep at night without taking a sedative.

Fear is terrible, yes, as God's Word states: ". . . *fear hath torment* (torture, dread)" (1 John 4:-18). The solution to fear is contained in this entire verse, note: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." *Note Moffatt's translation:* "Love has no dread in it; no, love in its fulness (or full development) drives all dread away, for dread has to do with punishment—anyone who has dread, has not reached the fullness of love."

In Christ is the remedy, He is the personification of the love of God, our eternal Father, and Creator of the universe; He is the Prince of Peace, peace to a troubled mind, to a tormented soul, to a fearful heart. He is the *Christmas* to all. He is God's gift to man. He is the only true victory over fear.

Why not have a *Merry Christmas* this season by surrendering all to our Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty Son of the living God. He is the *Good Tidings* (news) the angels sang about, He is the *great joy,* which shall be to all people, "Christ the Lord!" "Hallelujah!" "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

We hear Paul say in his letter to the Romans: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:-17). Turkey, chicken, roast beef, and all good things to eat are nice having their place in natural life, but they are not as important as the righteousness of Christ, the peace of God, and the joy in the Holy Ghost being in our lives this Christmas and at all times.

"Fear not," is commanded seventy-four times in the entire Bible. Most of the time, what we fear is caused by wrong believing, so we must practice daily faith in God. Fear indicates lack of trust; fear hinders faith.

The commanding words, *fear not* were spoken to Abram—Genesis 15:1; Hagar—Genesis 21:17; Moses—Exodus 14:13; Elisha—2 Kings 6:16; Isaiah—Isaiah 41:13; Mary—Luke 1:30; Disciples—Luke 12:32. This message is to all of us today, especially to His own: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Let us claim the promise, and this Christmas have a real spiritual and natural joy in our hearts knowing that regardless of violence, war, and corruption all around us the solution is in *Jesus,* the *Prince of Peace,* and that He is our righteousness, peace, and joy, and our life now and forevermore. Whether in life or death, to know He will be with us, is the greatest gift of God to man, a priceless gift, one to be cherished above all gifts received.

The Psalmist David said, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6).

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." *"A Merry, Merry, Christmas."*

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said,

"Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying,

ILLUSTRATED BY GUSTAVE DORE

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7

and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her,

"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Luke 1:26-35

A And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the

Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Luke 2:1-20

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying,

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him,

"In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,

"Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:1-11

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying,

"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

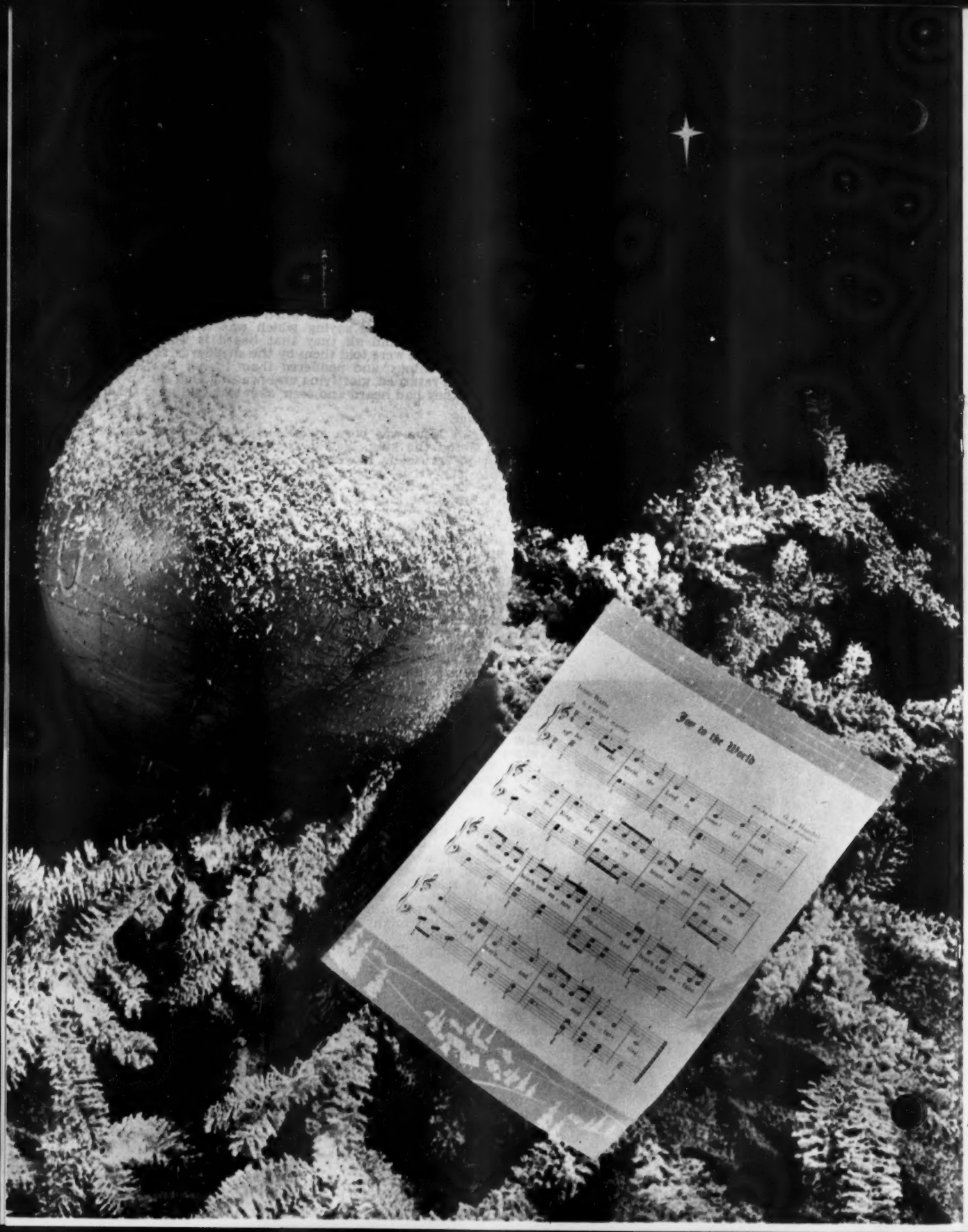
When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

"Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Matthew 2:13-15

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, "Abba, Father."

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.


Joy to the World

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

THE JOYFUL SOUND

By Ruby Slay

NEVER BEFORE had the future looked so dark for the children of Israel. Just as the darkness of night engulfed the lonely shepherds on the Judean hillside, so had it enveloped the children of God. At this time Rome was mistress of the world, and the Roman soldiers sought to make her power felt. The Jews were an oppressed people, heavily taxed, but the depressed state of the nation could not alter their views or shake their confidence. What did it matter that the Idumaean Herod had usurped the throne of David, except so far as his own guilt and their present subjection were concerned? Israel had passed through deeper water, and stood triumphant on the other shore. For centuries seemingly hopeless bondsmens in Egypt, they had not only been delivered, but had raised the God-inspired morning song of Jubilee, as they looked back upon the sea cleft for them, and which had buried their oppressors in their might and pride.

Again, for weary years had their captives hung Zion's harps by the rivers of that city and empire whose colossal grandeur, wherever they turned, must have carried to the scattered strangers the desolate feeling of utter hopelessness,—and yet, that empire had crumbled into dust, while Israel had again taken root and sprung up. In all their history the darkest hour of their night had ever preceded the dawn of a morning brighter than any that had yet broken. It was thus that with one voice all their prophets had bidden them wait and hope. Their prophecies had all been fulfilled in the past, and would they not be equally true in reference to that far more glorious future for Zion and for Israel, which was to be ushered in by the coming of the Messiah? Yes, even though they were strangers in a strange land, more earnest were their longings, more eager their gaze, till the dawn of that long expected day tinged the eastern sky with its brightness.

Their hope was kept aflame by such promises as Isaiah 9:6, 7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

AGAIN WE go back to that grassy slope on that wintry night of December where shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrificial services, when suddenly there came the long-delayed, unthought - of announcement. Heaven and earth seemed to mingle, as suddenly an angel stood dazzling before their eyes while the outstreaming glory of the Lord seemed to enwrap them, as in a mantle of light. It seems that we can almost hear the song of the angels ringing out over an armed camp, in a hard old Roman world, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased."

Even though this was the moment that the children of Israel had looked forward to with great anticipation, even though this was the moment that God's people had been waiting for the glorious tidings to burst upon them that He had come—yet, it seemed all so sudden—so strange. To think that on such slender thread, as the feeble throb of an infant-life, the salvation of the world should hang, and no better shelter be provided it than a stable, and no other cradle than a manger! And yet it is ever so today! On what slender thread has the continued life of the Church often seemed to hang; on what feeble throbbing that of every child of God—with no visible outward means to ward off danger, no home of comfort, no rest of ease. But oh hallelujah! how our hearts rejoice when we realize that Christmas rests upon the Rock of Ages.

IN JUST A few days now we will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who not only transformed the world, but still transforms the lives of those who trust in Him. Just as the Jews looked forward to the coming of the Messiah for their release, so is in Him today our only hope for the future, the foundation for our faith in a world that needs to tune its ear to heaven and hear the "Joyful Sound," Jesus Saves! Jesus Saves!

Only God could have thought of Christmas. Its beauty is beyond the wit of mortal man, so simple in its sublimity, so homey, yet so heavenly. Man would have made this glorious event a great pageant, but man-made pageants pass and fade, God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He blows no trumpet; He rings no bell. He begins within, seeking His ends by quiet growth, and by a strange power some men may mistakenly call weakness, a wisdom often mistaken for folly. Man seems to have one answer to every problem—force! That isn't the way of God. He didn't send an army to conquer the world, instead, He sent a babe. It is such wisdom that bends the knee, and such beauty that breaks the heart—and mends it. It is as if God is trying to teach us that He enters the life of men by lowly doors, attended by starry ideals and simple sentiments. They are indeed "wise men" who bow at such a shrine. By such faith, men are truly wise, knowing that no hope is too high, no dream too holy to be fulfilled—even the hope and dream of "peace on earth among men of good-will."

CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

By Wilma Smith

Missionary, Barbados

EVERYONE MUST "take stock" now and then, a sort of inventory with himself. That is really what I am doing. Taking my very own inventory which I would like to share with you.

To set the record straight, I am not a hypochondriac. At least I am pleased to think that my usual state of mind is a healthy, robust approach to life. I have run the gamut of childhood illnesses, with a few extras not so common to children. Through childhood and young adulthood I fell prey to headaches after too much excitement or emotional tension. Now, I like to think that I have matured enough to know how to avoid some of this by the proper mental approach to life. I cherish the thought that perhaps I have no more of these than the average person.

I spent a night home alone recently. It gave me an opportunity to re-evaluate things. During the past months we have hardly had time just to sit and contemplate. First was our surprise move from Trinidad to the island of Barbados. We packed, closed out our affairs permanently there and then unpacked in a new land. We were suddenly thrust into a new position, with the attendant church problems, in another foreign country. There was company to entertain, revival services to attend, and the many involvements of learning a new work, and we have had no time to ask ourselves how we feel.

So I was home with a swollen knee and time on my hands. First I made a pot of tea and sat down with our picture albums. So close to Christmas it is natural that our thoughts turn to the folks at home. Just a few days ago was Thanksgiving, but not here in Barbados. People here do not know about such as that. However one of our pastors called and wished us a happy Thanksgiving, a very friendly and thoughtful gesture, even though Thanksgiving as an American tradition meant nothing to him.

Brother and Sister Harold Stansky were with us but we could not get into the festivity of the day because their thoughts were back home with their family and ours were back home with ours. Now it is the same with Christmas. Christmas is in the stores, on counters and in shop windows. Christmas is on the air waves and in daily conversation, and it is evident also in the new paint job on the neighbor's house. Christmas is in the pageant they are practicing at church. But is that really Christmas? The climax will come in all the gift exchanging on Christmas day. But is the spirit really there? It seems even less real to us here away from our families but perhaps we can catch a glimpse of the real, because of the absence of the usual props.

During the day I had experienced little pin pricks of fear which were disturbing me. Now I asked myself, what did I fear? The little Japanese teapot and handleless cup from which I drank my tea carried me back to Hawaii where we did pioneer missionary work from 1947 until 1953. A wonderful Japanese neighbor gave us the tea set as a departure gift. I can see a picture of her lovely daughter on our piano now. I taught her piano lessons when she was a child and now she is a grown young lady, just a little younger than our Carol.

The swollen knee I am nursing

tonight makes me recall three months in Hawaii when I was unable to walk because of an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, which left me a helpless, swollen, inert mass of pain-wracked humanity. I recall days and nights when fear which pricked at my consciousness was worse than the pain I felt. I remember too the day the change came and faith was born.

DAY AFTER day I read my Bible which was propped up with a pillow on my chest. I could not turn the pages but had to wait until a member of my family passed by to do it for me. At the age of eleven I had rheumatic fever. My heart was seriously affected by it and I had to remain in bed day after day, week after week, not moving except as I was moved. Some of my parents' fear grew in me.

I recovered and I cannot tell that there has been any ill effects to my heart, except during that severe attack in Hawaii ten years ago. Perhaps what I felt then was really caused by fear. My husband and two children suffered along with me. But I like to think we came through the experience and learned at least two lessons, one in patience and one in faith. There was no certain Scripture that engendered my faith. There was just a conclusion I reached during those hours when I had time to meditate.

During the night hours when sleep eluded me, the fears enveloped me. But during the day I asked myself of what was I afraid? Was it death? If so, why? I am a Christian. If I believe what I say I believe, there is no death. It is just a crossing over from one plane of existence to another. If I am ready to go, then the thought of death should hold no terrors for me. There was a crystallization of my faith. In a moment of time I knew I actually believed what I said I had believed all these years. Faith in an all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful God swelled up all inside of me and was fused light and love from whence flowed this confidence. Fear died in that moment. I was still swelled in my joints, and it was still painful to move. But that wonderful sense of well being flooded me. There was peace within. I knew I was better and that I would recover. In a few days there was an immediate response in my physical being which I accredited to that change which had taken place within my mind and heart.

Today I felt those little pricks of fear again. My knee is swollen, and once more the questions arise. So I am having an inventory again. Of what am I afraid now? Not death. It is not that serious. I am a little depressed as an aftermath of a touch of "flu" last week. The swollen knee is no doubt a result of the chill which brought on the "flu." I sipped my tea. I had a little fear during the day of being unable to walk again because there is so much to do. The children are grown and away from us now, and there would be no one to help my husband in such an emergency. No family, that is. But was I afraid that God would let us down? Now, when He has given us a job to do? Has He ever, before? Has He not answered our prayers many times? Now, as I review these thoughts and the questions arise again, I find fear receding.

Fear is the big "boogey" which the devil uses to frighten God's people. Do you recall being frightened with the "boogey man" as a child? He seemed very real then but there was no substance to him. He existed only in your mind—a figment of your imagination. And so is fear. The things which cause fear may be substantial enough but the fear itself is built up within our minds to hinder us from believing God.

Fear upsets the chemical balance of one's body. In times of great danger fear can be a spur to self-preservation. When there is no place to turn and nothing we can do, the results of the fear then may act as a poison in the body. Tension clamps down on nerves and some may even become nauseated as a result of fear. What fear does physically it can do mentally and spiritually. Faith cannot act where fear exists. Fear is evidence of doubt. Fear is a lack of love, for ". . . perfect love casteth out fear."

So tonight I feel great love swell up within. Love for God; love for those who are near and dear yet so far away; love for the work we do and the people we serve. The curtain of fear is pulled back, and it was really only the curtain of night which makes the stars shine bright. If night never came at all, how could we see the stars, jewels of the night? "The heavens declare the glory of God . . ." If the shadow of fear never approached how could we have faith?

I know that I will be better tomorrow. All the little nagging fears of pain and becoming helpless are gone and that leaves room for faith to expand. There is peace. And now there is Christmas in my heart. Christmas is no certain time of the year to a Christian. Every time we have a new experience with God, every time we put to rout the enemy of our soul and regain our peace of mind, it is Christmas!

Who, other than the Christian, can know the true meaning of Christmas? All of the things we do to add to Christmas joys are rather like the window dressing in the shops which will be taken down and put up again next Christmas. They are like the tinsel which glitters but will tarnish and be discarded.

God gave His best. We can do no less. There is only one observance which He recognizes as proper and right and that is the giving of ourselves. God goes on giving and so should we. Between two friends it is not the things we give which are important. It is the giving of ourselves reciprocally that makes a friendship grow and thrive. So it is in our relationship with God.

When we fear, we are holding back a part of ourselves from God. Once we admit that we fear and confess it to God then it can be conquered. And every time we get the victory it will seem just like Christmas because we have received directly from the hand of God a gift magnificent—Christ reborn in our hearts!

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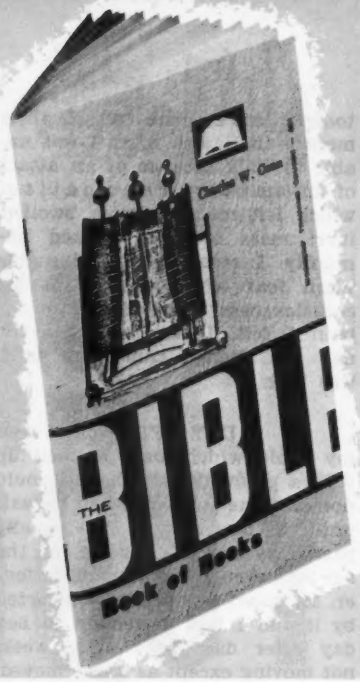

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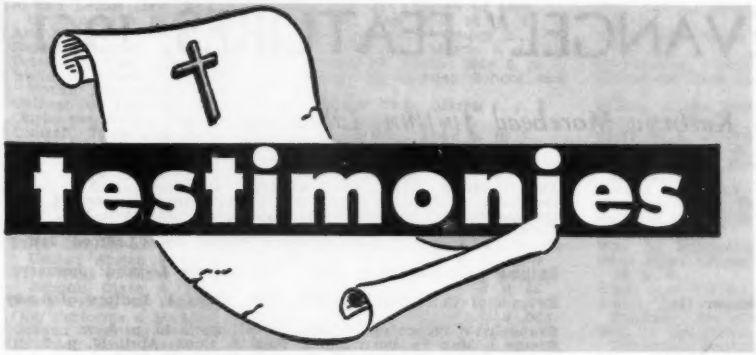

Thankful for Salvation

MADISON, Tenn.—I have enjoyed reading the *Evangel*, and the testimonies have been a blessing to me. Several weeks ago I told the Lord that I would send my testimony to the *Evangel* if He would deliver me from a heavy pressing feeling that I felt in my head. At times I felt like I would lose my mind. I was prayed for one night during a revival, and the Lord delivered me. I am thankful for His healing power.

Six years ago He healed a cist on my back. A doctor had wanted to remove it, and told me that it would continue to get worse which it did, until God healed it. Another great healing in my life was when God instantly healed me of sinus trouble when I was suffering terribly. No one can make me doubt the Lord's healing power. He healed my baby of diarrhea only last week.

I have so much to be thankful for, but most of all for salvation, sanctification, and the blessed Holy Ghost. —*Mrs. Roy Ferrell*

— — —

Have Faith in Jesus

CLARKSTON, Mich.—I want to thank God for hearing our prayers in a time of need. My husband and I weren't feeling very well. Sister Vera Bentley and some of the congregation of the Drayton Plains Church of God came to our home and prayed for us.

I was supposed to go into the hospital for a cardiograph and some other tests to see what was causing the pains in my chest. After they prayed for me, I didn't have to go and to this day I still haven't gone to the hospital. Thank God! I was told by our family doctor that I shouldn't sweep or lift anything, but after being prayed for I am able to take care of my nine children who range in age from 4 months to 11 years.

We had a visit from the public health nurse this past week advising the removal of our daughters adenoids as it is effecting her speech.

Also, another girl has a hip that was dislocated. She should have an operation as one leg is about 3 or 4 inches shorter, but we all believe that God can completely heal her. She is only 6 years old, but during service this morning I had the people pray for her and she said she felt something happen.

We are thanking God for what He has done and will do if we only have the faith in Him.

Some of the church members and Sister Bentley went to Ortonville to pray for a little girl who had her leg removed. The doctors said she had cancer and gave her only a month to live, but, thank God, that was about 10 or 12 weeks ago and she is still alive and appears to be doing better each day.

Our church may be small in number, but thank God, through their prayers of faith they can do wonders. Thank God for a group of people who care.

—*Mrs. Betty Finley*

— — —

Healed of Diabetes

KOKOMO, Ind.—About two years ago, I found that I had diabetes and after a laboratory test confirmed my discovery, I was put on a strict diet and medication. I really felt defeated for God had been my Healer for the last 39 years, and through my prayers, many people have been healed in my pastoral work in the past 20 years or more. But praise God, while preaching one Sunday morning, I mentioned the woman touching the hem of Jesus' garment and a sister in the church, who was afflicted with diabetes and rheumatism, jumped up and began to shout and praise God. She said, "God healed my shoulder. I couldn't raise my arm, but you see I can now." A few days later she noticed that the insulin she was taking was causing her to lose her vision, so she laid it aside. She began to realize that she didn't need it. She saw her doctor and had a laboratory test to find that she didn't have diabetes. Oh, praise God. When I heard about it, my faith was inspired. I quit my medication and diet and have been feeling fine since. I'm healed! Thank God! In this moment of anointing of the Holy Ghost we both were healed, though at the time we didn't realize it.

—*Rev. C. E. Swenson*

— — —

Praises God for His Healing Power

COTABATO, Philippines—I want to praise and exalt the name of our wonderful Saviour and Healer, the Lord Jesus Christ! I have been troubled of some pain in my chest. I promised the Lord I would send my testimony to the *Evangel* if He would completely heal me and deliver me from this pain. The Lord is so good. He did heal me as I believed in Him. Two months ago, the Lord healed me and praise the Lord, until now I have not felt the pain. Now I am healthy and strong in the service of the Lord. I praise Him so much for His healing power.

—*F. F. Cortez*

— — —

Much Better After Promise Fulfilled

CLINTON, S. C. — I was so weak that I could hardly go and had such spells with my stomach. It would cut my breath off and I would gasp for breath. I promised to send my testimony to the *Evangel* if the Lord would heal me. Now, I am so much better. I have been healed so many times. I believe that I will be completely healed. All that read this please pray for me. I am saved but I need to be closer to the Lord. Please pray for my children that they will be saved before it is too late.—*Mrs. Josie Leopard*

— — —

Keeps Promise to the Lord

RIVERDALE, Ga.—I want to tell you how good Jesus is to me. I had suffered in my body for about twelve years, but the last two years I was so sick that only God knew how sick I was. I told my family and friends but they didn't understand because I stayed up and went to church. I went to four different doctors, but they didn't do me any good. Several people prayed for me. Sister Ann Brown came and ran us a revival and she prayed for me; also our pastor, Brother Arthur Smith, prayed and the Lord healed me. I wasn't healed instantly, but I kept believing and getting better. I promised the Lord that I would write my testimony to the *Evangel*. —*Nancy Satterfield*

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religion today

Was Christ a Farmer? Pottery Hints He Was

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (EP)—Throughout the New Testament the Greek word *tekton* is translated as "carpenter," but pottery given to the Southern Baptist Theological seminary here by three Jewish antiquities dealers translates the same word "farmer."

Dr. Jerry Vardamen, seminary professor of archaeology, translated the pottery which will make up the new Eisenberg Museum of Egyptian and Near-Eastern Antiquities to be formally opened this fall in the seminary's new library. One piece of pottery contains Greek writing of the First Century A.D. It reads: "Give to Tathris in Messour (a month) for her wage one artabae (a measure of wheat)." Another says: "Give wild chicklings (or husks) for sale, four artabae."

The one which Dr. Vardamen found most interesting reads: "Give to the workman (or farmer) in the month of Messour with respect to the reaping of wheat, two artabae."

The Greek word translated as "farmer" is *tekton*. This is the word which is used in the Gospels of Matthew (13:55) and Mark (6:3) to describe Christ as a carpenter. "Is not this the carpenter's son . . ." and "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary . . . ?"

Dr. Vardamen says the scribblings on one piece of pottery are not enough to dislodge the scholarly view that Jesus was a carpenter, but they show how knowledge can be expanded through antiquities.

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Advance Proposal to Merge Methodist, EUB Churches

OSLO, Norway (EP)—One main item of business at the Tenth World Methodist Conference here was an analysis of the factors involved in a proposed merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church.

Nineteen committees were established to study areas of agreement and disagreement between the two United States Church bodies. They will try to decide the new name for the proposed united church, representation in denominational meetings, educational and other church institutions, ministerial orders, rituals and financial arrangements.

The EUB Church has 760,000 members; The Methodist Church, 10,000,000.

— — —

"Immodestly Dressed Tourists Go Home!"

JERUSALEM (EP)—Government authorities in Jordan have issued a warning to all foreign women tourists that they must wear "modest and decorous" dresses when visiting the Holy Places in Jerusalem's Old City and Bethlehem, both under Jordan control.

Jordan Radio said many foreign women wore shorts and other "immodest attire" when visiting the Mosque of Omar (a Mohammedan shrine here), the Church of the Nativity and other places of sacred significance to religious believers.

The broadcast added that strict measures would be taken against offenders.

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Protestant Family Murdered in Mexico

OAXACA, Mexico (EP)—Seven members of a Protestant family of Mazateca Indians were murdered here July 23, by a mob of fanatics. The slaughter occurred at night when armed men forced their way into the house and killed every member of a family associated with a Pilgrim Holiness Church mission church.

The Rev. F. H. Soltero, head of the denomination's church in Mexico, reported in Valles, Mexico, that he had known of persecution and opposition among the 12 small Mazateca congregations in the mountains round about, but he said the people had been encouraged to go on.

"We had one large family in San Miguel that was converted about two years ago," he said. "For the past year, the authorities in that town had been bothering them and had often called the men to the city hall and ordered that they leave the Protestant way and go back to the Catholic church.

"Last month (July), the authorities thought that by naming one of the men of this family to be the steward in the Catholic church, no doubt the whole family would return to the church. When our brother refused to accept this appointment, saying that he was not a Catholic, the authorities became angry and threatened him. . . ."

At the time of the massacre, the eldest and youngest sons were outside guarding their field of corn. They returned to the horrible spectacle and then were ordered to pay a big price for the burials. If they did not, the government officials said their crops and everything else they had would be confiscated.

"Our hearts are heavy over this crime," says Pastor Soltero, "but we know God is able to see us through."

— — —

Ghana Women Protest Polygamy Laws

ACCRA, Ghana (EP)—Members of women's religious and civic groups here are protesting the government's new marriage legislation which would permit polygamy. Roman Catholic women especially stressed that the law will have "extremely negative results." They said that countries "seeking civil progress must reject polygamy which constitutes an insult to the dignity of the African woman."

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Sentence Protestant Youth Leaders to Long Terms in Communist Jail

Two leaders of the East German Protestant Youth Movement have been sentenced by the Communist District Court of Rostock to eight years at hard labor, on charges of anti-state activities. They were Dietrich Gerloff and Juergen Wiechert, of East Berlin.

Sentenced with them on the same charge were 10 other church youths who received jail terms ranging from three months to two years. All had been accused of having denounced the blockade of the East-West Berlin border, smuggling anti-state publications from West Berlin into the Soviet Zone, and attending the German Evangelical Church Day Congress in West Berlin.—(EP)

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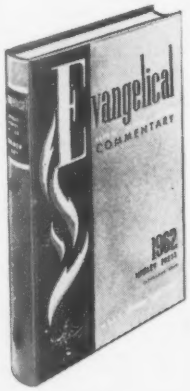

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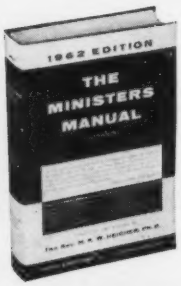

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